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## **The American Institute of Sacred Literature**

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The Institute announces this year in its Outline Series of Courses for Bible Classes and Individuals ten courses. One of these is a new course on The Origin and Religious Teaching of the Old Testament Books. The title might indicate something far from elementary, but the course is intended to be used by beginners in the study of the Old Testament from the modern point of view. It differs from other works on biblical introduction in that it aims to lead the student to find out for himself from the actual reading of the Bible text as much as possible about the origin and teaching of the books. It does not, however, leave the student entirely to this method, but gives him in connection with each book or series of books a sufficient introduction to start him aright in his reading.

This course is presented in response to the request which has been coming from all quarters for a course which will enable a pastor to introduce his young people to the Old Testament in a living way, or a Sunday-school teacher to secure the general survey and appreciation of the Old Testament which he needs as a background for all Old Testament teaching, and will, while adopting the modern point of view, not concern itself with higher criticism as such, but present to the student the historical development of the Old Testament literature, leading him to see the immense religious significance of this literature in the past, in the present, and in the future.

The demand for short courses is this year fully met. The Universal Element in the Psalter is a course which, while not neglecting the help of historical and literary study, seeks to emphasize the use of the Psalms from a devotional point of view in such a way as to give fresh interest to psalms already familiar to many. A three months' work on the Book of Job has been extracted from The Work of the Old Testament Sages and published separately. In the two-months' course on Four Letters of Paul, the section on Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans has been extracted from the longer course on The Founding of the Christian Church, by Professor Ernest D. Burton.

The course on The Founding of The Christian Church covers the period to be studied by the International Lessons during the year 1909. Here,

too, is a point of union between the work of the Institute and the general Bible-study public which does not frequently occur.

It is interesting to note as an evidence of the present trend in Bible study that in the year which closed July first the course on the Social and Ethical Teachings of Jesus was only second to the Foreshadowings of the Christ in the entire list. Does this not indicate on the one hand that there is an increasing interest in the Old Testament, and on the other hand that it is the practical bearing of the teaching of Jesus upon present-day problems which is seen to be the vital element in the study of his life?

The Professional Reading Courses of the Institute, designed to assist ministers and Bible teachers in keeping fresh in professional reading, are this year seventeen in number. The last one to be added is a course which is greatly needed. The average minister has not the time to go into questions of criticism or of philosophy to any great extent. He cannot accept the work of scholars on the basis of his own investigation of the problems which have been met by scholarship. He must look at results and accept them according to his faith in the honesty of scholarship and the reasonableness of the results. What he wishes to know is the bearing of it all upon present thought and life in so far as it concerns what he is to preach, teach, and believe. The new course is entitled Constructive Theories of Modern Scholarship concerning the Bible, the Church, and Religion.

It is not to be supposed that the books constituting this course are in any sense final. They are, however, constructive. They are forerunners of a literature which will be increasingly helpful. They are the books which every minister should read and think about, criticize and improve upon if possible.

It should be remembered that any minister may become a member of the Professional Reading Guild through his subscription to the *Biblical World* or the *American Journal of Theology*, whether this subscription be a renewal or a new subscription, provided only that he makes known his desire to belong to this Guild when he sends in his subscription. The helps consist of review sheets prepared by specialists and accompanied by further bibliography.

These courses are frequently made the basis of a writer's work for ministers' clubs or associations. Vital topics for discussion are therefore a part of each review.